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1489. f. 1965.



DEB CLINTON.



"'On the rock — the Black Rock,' shouted the stranger." P. 44.

DEB CLINTON,

THE

SMUGGLER'S DAUGHTER.

BY

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DEB CLINTON,
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CHAPTER I.

MASSES of grey cloud hurried onwards, and curtailed over the western sky, blotting out the soft red glow; while long lines of white waves, and the sound of the sea, rising from moment to moment, gave warning to seafaring people of a coming storm.

A cottage, much out of repair, stood at the outskirts of a long, straggling village, composed of one steep street, and two or three narrow lanes with detached cottages, leading to the old church on the hill. This fishing village was called Abbeyland; but the cottage of which we speak stood quite

away, on a small piece of ground where the shore was level. It stood near a little stream between two high cliffs; where this stream fell into the sea, there was a cove, generally covered thickly with seaweed, which at certain times was carted away to the interior to be used on the land.

Within sight of the cottage, on the highest point of the most distant cliff, there was a stone wall, inclosing a group of buildings, all low and substantial, called the Coastguard Station.

The cottage was almost on the beach, and it was not unusual in a high tide for the waves to dash over the courtyard wall. Some people wondered how any one could live in such a lonely and desolate spot, and, to judge from the troubled and anxious looks which a woman cast around her each time that she came and stood at the door, one might believe that *she* at least did not approve of it. Her head and shoulders were muffled in an old thick shawl; from its folds came a feeble, cracked, and fretful voice,—

“ Deb! Deb! Deborah!—Deborah Clinton!” Then, as there was no answer, in a lower and more querulous tone,—“ Dear sakes! what can have come to the lass now? But she’s like the rest, and I’m left deserted and cared for no more than

if I was the seaweed cast on the shore!—Aye, the only one that ever did care, and always spoke pretty and looked pretty too, lies as food for the worms, and the grass and weeds grow over her! And there's a storm blowing up, and they'll be home in a trice, and not a spark of fire or a morsel of victuals ready to stop their angry, noisy throats! Deb! Deb! where are you hiding? The fire is out, and the wind cuts so cold over my poor, stiff limbs, like a knife."

Just in time to catch the last few words, a slight figure came from the beach and followed the first speaker into the cottage. Then in a measured, cold way, she began to rekindle the fire.

"What can have taken you away so long, Deb? I believe you don't care if I want any thing or no. You wouldn't care if you was to come in and find me stiff and stark. You've no feelings! Well, well, those who have no feelings can't feel like those who have."

"What is it you're wanting, mother?" asked Deborah, stopping in her work for a moment and facing round on the woman, who was now crouching down in a miserable elbow-chair, and drawing her shawl still closer over her head.

The hard, cold tone of the daughter caused the

mother's fretful talk to cease; she wiped away a tear and shivered.

"Oh, I don't want anything particular, but there'll be father and Bob back here directly. And you know what a hurry they'll be in, with no fire and no supper ready."

"Where's the supper to come from?" asked Deborah, in the same voice; and again trying to coax a little blaze round a kettle.

"Aye, where indeed? That's what I say, and have said for this hour past. If they don't bring any money they can't expect meat. But you and I know they will expect it, and there'll be a dreadful row again if you don't be quick and get something for them. And—and, Deb, I can't bear it! I'm too ill and too old, to bear it any more! If there's brawl and noise to-night, it will be the death of me. But who cares for that?" and, burying her face in her hands, she broke into a wailing cry, and rocked herself to and fro.

Deborah rose from her stooping position, glanced round the room, then out of the window, all broken and stuffed with rags as it was. There was a look of hard indifference on the girl's pale, thin face, not quite pleasant, yet the features were clear cut and well formed. She wore a blue

cotton gown, fitting closely, and unrelieved by any bit of white in the shape of collar or frill, but a once bright-coloured handkerchief was carelessly tied round her neck; a rusty black apron and ragged boots were hardly consistent with the richness and beauty of the dark hair, plaited carefully and twisted tastefully round her head. A pair of coral earrings completed her costume, in which there was evident poverty, but no sign of neglect.

At last her efforts were successful, and a cheerful blaze sprang up, and soon set the kettle singing, giving an air of something like comfort, even to the dreary kitchen.

"Mother," said the girl, with a slight stamp of her foot, and knitting her brows, "I do wish you would not keep on fretting. It's enough to turn one to stone; and what good does it do?"

"Well, not much, Deb, but I can't help it—I can't. I'm so weak and low."

"There, there. The water boils, and you'll get your tea, now."

"Is there a bit of pork in the cask, Deb? Do look! and make haste and put it in the pot, or father will be in his tantrums again. Oh, me! it makes my poor bones clatter, it do, just to think of it. Deb," she added, when her daughter re-

turned, "do come and have some tea yourself; it will do you a power of good. You've found some pork, then?"

Deborah, without giving an answer, plunged the meat into a pot, and raked up the fire round it. Then she searched in a cupboard, and brought out part of a loaf and a scrap of cheese, and put them on the table, with a long-necked gin-bottle.

"Aye, a drop of that now would do me good, Deb," said the mother.

"No, it would do your harm, and I'm not going to give it you, mother. There will be fuss enough without you being off your balance; and when you've finished your tea I advise you to go up-stairs to bed."

But Mrs. Clinton did not choose to follow this advice. She was quiet for a little time after her tea, and then began again, in a low murmur of fretful words, which vexed her daughter.

"Whist, mother! You make me right down creepy, and—hearken! there's other noise coming fast to us."

The mother lifted her head from the shawl, and listened, with a sharp, anxious, and fearful expression, while Deborah crossed her arms over her breast, and seemed to take a firmer and more up-



right position in front of the hearth, while her face seemed to grow harder and sharper, as the sound of rough voices and heavy feet came nearer and more near.

A moment after, the door burst open, and two men entered. Jestings and evil words, passion and laughter, seemed at once to fill the room, and with it all came a blast of cold air, and the boom of waves: the storm was really rising.

"Now, then, be quick and swallow the victuals," growled the elder man, the master of the cottage, Job Clinton by name; "if this clatter goes on, we shall be wanted in double-quick time. So I say, make haste, Bob;" and sitting on the best chair, he took a long draught from the bottle.

The son looked sulkily at the table, and then at the fire, and grumbled with an oath,—

"That it was very fine to say eat; but what was there to eat?"

Then he glanced sideways at his sister, who had not stirred, while her father swore at her for standing like a statue, and ordered her to be quick and serve the supper, or she'd be sorry.

"When the meat is boiled I'll dish it. If you are in a hurry, you can begin with the cheese; and let me tell you, that without money to buy

it, you'll find no more suppers. It was lucky I found this piece—the last in the cask.”

“Boarding-school manners, that is,” said Bob, in a spiteful tone. “Father, tell Deb who we fell foul of just now; such a pretty dollish young man. Oh! but he looked good, and he had been listening to a bushel of maxims, I’ll wager, and perhaps a few complaints, about the bad father and wild brother, and so on.”

“If I know that Deb here dares to talk about us to any young fool, why, she knows, and I know, that he’ll be likely to feel it.”

“For any sake, Job, don’t be talking so fearful,” whined the mother.

“Hold your chatter, old woman, if you please; and, Deb, bring out that pork,” said the father, with a scowl, which sent his wife back within the shelter of her shawl.

Deborah did not take up the meat, but with a quiver of her lips and a spark in her dark eyes, she said in a clear voice,—

“Bob, once again, I bid you give up these low jokes. Father, do you hear me? I will not have him say so. It is not true.”

Father and son joined in a loud burst of laughter, and then the father said,—

"Stop his mouth, girl, if you like, and if you can. As to that chap Bob spoke of, I can't see much in him; but if you fancy him, take him; only he must not show his face here."

"I do not fancy him; I hate and despise him; I have no young man—none—and you know it. No one with any self-respect would seek me; other maidens may find out of their poor homes a heart to lean on and to love, and be loved by, perhaps,—but I! God help me! I have no one in the house and in all the wide world to love me! Abuse and oaths, that's my fare! Hard work and no thanks. But there's the churchyard by-and-bye, and *one* has gone there already."

Such an outburst was so unusual from Deborah that it set the feeble mother off into choking sobs, and even the rough father looked uncomfortable.

Job turned again to the bottle, and kicking Bob under the table, who was still jeering in a provoking way, he said,—

"Enough of that, Bob. Deb, give us the supper, girl."

Deborah refused to come to the table, on which she put the pork, but cut herself a piece of bread, which she ate, sitting by the small window, looking

towards the cliff, and the narrow path leading to a flag-staff, belonging to the Preventive people.

The sea now and then splashed on the cottage window, but the inhabitants were used to it, and did not feel uneasy. It was a rough and dangerous coast; but in spite of this, a brisk, illegal trade was carried on, and nearly all the villagers were smugglers. Some of the farmers in the neighbourhood secretly encouraged this, even at times lending hiding-places, and sending help to convey the booty away. They liked a little "best brandy" cheap, and their wives liked tea and a bit of "real lace." But within the memory of one or two old persons, even a worse trade had been carried on at Abbeyland.

In several of the cottages were still to be seen carved chests of foreign wood, curious swords or daggers, besides pieces of rich velvet and silk, and other articles out of keeping with the rest of the furniture. About such things the owners were shy of speaking, though at the present time the dreadful "wrecking" trade had given place to smuggling, and a fierce warfare was carried on between the villagers and the Coast-guard men.



CHAPTER II.

DEBORAH'S watch was so intent at the window that she did not appear to notice what went on close to her. After much rough speech and some curious preparations, both father and son left the cottage, and this was the signal for Mrs. Clinton's wailing complaints to begin. The wind whistled round about the thatch, and moaned at the broken windows and other crevices.

"Deb, do make fast that door. It shakes fit to fall in, and lets in the cutting wind."

Deborah did not move, but only bent closer to the window. She was looking intently at something outside. But on her mother's returning to her usual wail that "Nobody cared if she died of cold, and how was she to go to bed and sleep, being sure, as she was, that one of the men would be brought home stark and dead on a plank." Then Deborah went quickly to the door, and stilled the shaking by stuffing in a cloth.

"Mother," she said, "do you know if anything particular is going on to-night?"

"Yes; haven't they been talking of it this week past? But I believe you don't hear or see half your time, Deb. Lucky for you. I see too much, I dare say. But what makes you ask that? Do you see aught, Deb?" and she shuffled across the floor, and came behind her daughter, holding on by her shoulder. "Why, Deb, surely that long, black line is a crowd of men. It's the country folks come again; depend on it, there will be much ado, and just as like as not there will be blood spilt this night."

"Yes, mother," and the girl bent nearer, and spoke in a low, breathless tone. "They've been climbing, one after another, up that path, for ever so long. There must be at least a score there; and, see! isn't that a sail far out there? The moon will be up in two hours, but the clouds are gathering, and it is just the night for all this dark work. They'll have to be careful, for the sea is risen fearfully, and the wind will be soon a gale."

"It's a long while since the farmer folk have shown here," said the mother; "depend on it, there's a rich booty on hand. Well, well, who'd have thought that I should ever be hooked on to such a

concern? I that was respectably reared, and had only well-to-do people akin to me, I never thought of such a come-down as this. Woe's me! such a business as your father neglected, and lost all his own capital as well as my little fortune, and ruined himself and family, and dragged us all here among a set of savages; and it gets worse and worse, and there's nothing left now, but just to die."

As she fell into her usual fretful tone, Deborah let go her mother's hand, and when she next spoke, her voice was cold and hard:—

"Whatever is going on we can't mend it. It is too late now to talk of old times. Here we are, and here we must stay, and bear it. Fretting and talking only does harm. Come, let me help you to bed. The fire is out, and that light won't last long. Come!"

The more determined and vigorous will of the daughter overcame the crushed and weary mother. She meekly followed her daughter up the rickety stairs, and soon her troubles were forgotten in sleep. Deborah put her mother's things tidily on the chair, looked at the pinched, worn face for a moment, and with a deep sigh turned away, and again took her station at the window.

The lamp went out, and the moon only showed

her pale, watery light now and then. During these brief gleams of light, sharp and accustomed eyes might see a small brig, apparently straining her utmost to keep from being dashed to pieces. There was also a black spot, seen for an instant now and again, amid the foaming waves. Could it be a boat?

The sea roared, but through it all Deborah heard every now and then a sharp report of fire-arms. After a time, all ceased, save the noise from the storm, and on the moon showing its edge of light behind a black cloud, she started at seeing a group of men coming along the beach. She left her post and went up-stairs to her own small room, drawing the bolt firmly after her. Ten minutes after the door below was burst open, and suppressed voices sounded. They did not come up-stairs, but whether they remained below or went out again Deborah knew not. Worn out by fatigue and hunger, she had fallen asleep, even before taking off her clothes.





CHAPTER III.

PERHAPS a more dismal home than Deborah Clinton's it would be difficult to find. It was absolutely uncheered by one ray of the sunshine of comfort or hope. Mrs. Clinton was broken down in health. She had never been strong in mind or body, and had been, as she so piteously and so often said, "bred in all comfort."

Job Clinton had won the heart of Lucy Bell by his gay manners and gift of song, and at first, helped by her parents, they went on well. Several children were born, but all died save three; the youngest, Deborah, was taken at an early age by an uncle and aunt, who paid the expense of a good school. Having no child of their own, they lavished on her all they had to bestow of money and love. Meanwhile, the other girl, Lucy, was the pride of her mother's heart, and for some time, in an odd way, a pet of her father's. She was always delicate, and had a quiet, gentle temper. Deborah,

a contrast in every thing, from her dark eyes to her quick temper, loved Lucy with all her heart. She always believed that the angels she read about at school must be like Lucy.

When Deborah was thirteen her father was ruined, every thing was sold off, and even then debts remained. He had fallen into bad company, and grown fond of drinking, and all his good-humour had vanished at home. The family quitted the town where they had so long lived respectably, and one of his lately-made friends encouraged him to come to Abbeyland, and join in a fishing speculation, which fell in with his love of sport and adventure.

They rented, almost for nothing, the tumble-down cottage on the beach, and soon Job Clinton and his young son were fully employed. At first it did not strike the wife in what way they gained the greater part of the money they brought home. But by degrees her eyes were opened to the fact, that the fishing trade was only a blind, and that the real business was smuggling. Sometimes money was plentiful, sometimes there was none, and pinching poverty pressed hardly on the poor woman, who knew so little how to meet it. She fell ill, and when she was able to drag herself from

her bed it was to find her darling Lucy fading away in "a galloping consumption."

Deborah was sent for to see her sister, and help in the nursing. The young girl could not believe that the beautiful bright colour in her sister's cheeks spoke of illness, far less of death. Though grateful to her uncle and aunt, Deborah did not love them, and she felt they did not understand her. She loved no one but Lucy, and all her heart was set on her. It was Lucy who with many a pause for breath, begged Deb never to forsake "poor mother," but to leave the comfortable home of uncle and aunt and come back to fulfil her duty to her parents. Lucy said that trouble had sadly changed their father; she feared he led a bad, wild life, and Bob even worse: but when she, Lucy, was gone, and lying in the churchyard, Deborah must come and take care of "poor mother," and never forget Lucy, but "try and follow her some day."

"Where?" Deborah had asked.

"To heaven, where God is, and where there is rest and joy for good people."

Deborah bowed her head in silence. Her grief was too bitter for words. The world seemed very dark and forlorn for her when Lucy was dead.



As is often the case, one trouble followed another quickly. While Deborah was still feeling half stunned at her sister's loss, the tidings came of her uncle's death, which event changed Deborah's prospects; for her aunt returned to her own friends in the north of England, leaving a pair of coral earrings and a smartly bound book for her "dear niece, Deborah."

So Deborah found herself in a new and very strange life all the less prepared for its trials, from having enjoyed so much comfort, and even luxury, under her uncle's roof; while the education she had received was just enough to give her notions beyond her station in life, without any solid principle or real wisdom.

And it was truly a miserable home into which the poor girl was thrown, where father and brother only came to storm and swear; where dark deeds were done, in which close mystery was needful; and where the mother gave all up as lost, and sank down into abject misery and rags, without energy to mend any thing, or to strive against the evil. Deborah was either sworn at for obstinacy and pride, or laughed at for pretending to be above them, and for her "boarding-school education." Soon her neat wardrobe melted away, and

there was no means of restoring it. She was expected to work hard, and rarely received any thanks, but had to bear that constant complaining and fretting from her mother, which tried her even more than the coarse words from her father and brother.

Remembering Lucy's words, she did her work, and remained there, but her heart froze up, and life became a sad puzzle to Deborah Clinton. She hated the noise, the ugliness and misery of this coarse life. Poverty she had never known before, and she rebelled against her lot as hard and unjust. Her mother's complaints wearied her, and though in her own heart as discontented as her mother, she was too proud to murmur.

At first Deborah went often to the churchyard, but after, when her dress became very shabby, she felt ashamed to meet any one. Then she sought the wild cliffs, and looking over the sea, she questioned and wondered painfully, "Where Lucy was now?" It was her one pleasure to wander about in these solitary places and indulge in her thoughts and dreams. But as time went on these dreams became less vivid, and Deborah grew harder and colder. She had not learnt to find comfort and peace in suffering, for her the

glorious Gospel of the grace of God was a dead letter. The story of the Man of Sorrows was a tale she had loved to read long ago, and had been deeply moved by it. But now in *her* sorrow she knew not how to seek Him, or to feel His hand holding her up safe above the waters. She was desolate, craving for love, for goodness, and, as she said, for justice. But all around her was darkness and mystery. The only thing plain to be seen and felt was the brutal violence, the sordid poverty of her own home, and from it she saw no escape.





CHAPTER IV.

SOME days after the stormy night mentioned above Clinton bade his daughter go into the village to buy some stores and other necessaries. He said he wished for a good supper, and enough for two or three mates who were coming on business.

"Now you have some money you might allow Deb a pair of shoes and me a warmer gown; as if this old one was fit for a decent woman, and me, crippled with pains in my limbs, and forced to cover myself in this old shawl," whined out Mrs. Clinton.

"Just hold your squeaking voice, will you?" he returned, rudely; "if you want gowns you may work for them. Any how, you'll wait till I've got safe through this next job; and if it wins, and brings what I expect, I don't say but what I may for once come down handsome."

Deborah felt bitterly the being obliged to expose her shabbiness to the villagers. Very sensi-

tive was she to the fact of her darned dress and ragged shoes. She generally enjoyed this particular walk across the fields to the mill. There was the rustic bridge spanning the clear and rapid stream, and the old wheel with its exquisite colourings of moss and lichen, and the plants by the water-side, and the drooping, graceful willow; all this stirred something in Deborah, and sometimes nearly brought tears to her eyes, though she could not explain why. But to-day she could not enjoy it as usual, for in the village she had heard that great preparations were being made at the Coast-guard station against the next smuggling venture, many more men were expected, and the lieutenant was determined to put it down with a strong arm.

“More men and more arms!” Something terrible will happen, thought poor Deborah, as she hurried back to her distasteful home. If she paused on reaching the door,—paused with a shudder, can it be wondered at? For within were several people, who seemed to be talking together, and there was Bob’s laugh and her father’s oaths.

Something was doubtless on foot, and Deborah was glad to pass quickly out of the kitchen and pretend to be busy in the back-yard. Any thing,

rather than be among those men, exposed to their rude stare and coarse jests.

"Deb," presently whispered her mother, "I'm sure something dreadful is going on. Do, Deb, go and beg your father,—yes, beg him on your knees not to join them! He will be the death of me; I know he will. I can't bear it, Deb."

"Pray he may not be the death of any one else, mother. But as to my saying any thing, you know I may as well speak to the wind and waves. They will go their own way; let them."

However, after events proved to both mother and daughter, that whatever deed was planned for the future, it was not to come off at once. This night there was a meeting to settle plans. Clinton's cottage was convenient for such meetings, and he had not lost his old love for "hospitality," as he called it, nor did he grudge any money on such an occasion. Perhaps he did not know, or knowing did not care, that his wife and daughter often had to live on dry bread and tea, for many days, to make up for the cost of such a feast.

The men sat till late drinking, and many were unable to leave the cottage, but lay about on the floor, and staggered to their homes in the morning.

But no liberty with the bottle was ever allowed when "business" was on hand, and this, the poor, frightened women up-stairs knew; as they lay together on one bed, glad to hold each other's hand, scared with the noise of revelry, which, though not new, always made them shiver with fear.

"Surely if there is a God, He will punish this," said Deborah, after a wild burst of noise.

"Dear heart, Deb, don't be saying such awful words. Don't say 'if' as if you doubted God. They call that being something—I forget the name—but something wicked, and anybody might be struck down dead in a minute just for denying there is a God."

"I don't deny it, but sometimes I doubt if there is any but God the Avenger. That God the prophets write about, whose voice is thunder, and who sends destruction, and plagues, and the destroying angel. But as to God the Father, who never forsakes the poor and needy, and hears the sighs of prisoners—mother, where is He? Do *you* know? Do *you* feel Him anywhere?"

"I don't; I can't; I haven't this long time, it fairly puzzles me. Sometimes I get thinking that, maybe, the devil has got the better of all, and that every body and every thing is wicked on

earth, and so God hides Himself and leaves us all to perish."

"But then those who are really good, if there be any living,—at all events those who are dead, like our Lucy—what about them? I suppose she's safe somewhere. You mind, mother, she begged me, and you and all, to be sure and meet her again. Where?—Where?—How? O mother! can you or any one show me? My heart seems ready to burst sometimes with longing and thinking, and trying to see, and my brain grows dizzy."

In her excitement Deborah had risen from the bed, and had fallen on her knees, her hands tightly clasped, and her eyes bent, now on her mother, now upwards, in an earnest, pleading way.

Her mother was surprised and startled, for she had never seen her child thus, or heard her speak so. She stared first in fright, and then also clasping her thin hands, she burst into sobs and tears.

"O Deb! O child! don't! don't! You say such fearful things."

"I can't bear it. There's no comfort anywhere—nowhere."

"It's wicked to say that. When I went to church regular—and I always did when I lived

respectable, and had tidy clothes,—I used to hear the minister say that God never forgot the poor, and would help all who were in misery. It's wicked of you to say that He doesn't, though all the same I own it looks like it; and why I am so put upon and so miserable, I'm sure I don't know. What have I ever done? I always lived quiet and respectable, and did my work, though of course I wasn't expected to work hard as some,—I wasn't reared to it."

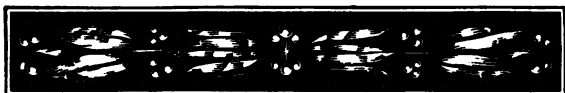
"Hush, mother!" Deborah interrupted, in her usual tone of voice, "they'll hear you. They are quieter now. Do let us try and sleep."

"Yes, Deb; yes. Come and lie close to me, and if I can remember it, I'll say a prayer, it will do no harm, and it might comfort us a bit."

So Mrs. Clinton whispered part of a prayer and an old hymn, she had once been fond of singing. Deborah joined her, and went on where her mother forgot the words.

Mrs. Clinton soon dropped off asleep, though tears still stood on her withered cheeks. In after years Deborah remembered that night with thankfulness.





CHAPTER V.

THE autumn was unusually fine, and Abbeyland people seemed stirred up, and were busy in the rope-walk, busy on the beach or under sheds mending the boats, patching up nets and sails, and even some roofs were fresh-thatched.

Clinton and his son worked hard at their boat and in their shed, but nothing was done to the ruinous cottage; and Mrs. Clinton shivered and almost wished for real cold weather when a fire was necessary, for she said the sunshine only showed the cracks in the walls more plainly.

Deborah used the fine weather to take a holiday, wandering away out of sight and out of reach, beyond the farther point to where a long reef of queer, jagged rocks lay tumbled about in a fantastic manner. From this point the Coast-guard buildings could be seen; and there was a distant view of the village church with its elms, and one dark yew as a contrast. Here there

were clear pools in natural basins, where beautiful and curious creatures were not afraid to show their bright jewels. The people called them "sea-flowers," or "sea-pinks." Whatever their names might be, Deborah rejoiced in their beauty, and wondered how they came there, and why so much beauty should be wasted. She enjoyed walking along the sands there, and coming as near as they would let her to the flocks of sea-birds; or she lingered to watch a crab run sideways to its hole; or stopped to pick up some pearly shell, or feathery spray of seaweed. She strained her eyes to the far-off horizon, thinking of the strange countries that lay beyond, where people spoke another language. She wondered if there were smugglers and Coast-guard people there.

Against the yellow light the sharp "Black Rock," as it was called, stood out more grim and jagged than usual; but it was not this alone which caused Deborah to stand still suddenly, and cast such a surprised, searching look in that direction.

It was the figure of a man, standing on the Black Rock and throwing about his arms and waving a handkerchief. Probably one of the people from the country villages come for a day's holiday by the sea. It could not be an Abbey-

land person; every one in the place knew that the Black Rock was a dangerous place at all times, owing to some shifting sand round it; or, worse still, there was said to be one spot which if you put your foot on it, you sank rapidly, and disappeared into a bottomless pit. Terrible tales were rife in the village of death or narrow escapes from these dangers.

But, here a man stood, where no one willingly ever went, and even while Deborah looked and wondered he seemed to be sinking. He threw out his arms convulsively,—staggered, and then fell down off the rock on the sand.

There was another danger connected with the Black Rock, that, though it was easy enough to get there, it was by no means easy to get back. When the tide came in, which it did very rapidly, it cut off this rock from the mainland with a deep and broad expanse of water, almost before a person was aware that a single wave had washed round behind.

Deborah knew by other landmarks that at this moment the tide had probably surrounded the rock. She had never in her wildest fit of wandering ventured to this spot, having a terror of the sinking sand; but now there lay a fellow-creature,

ignorant of part of his danger, though evidently, from his gestures, aware of something desperate. Had he fainted from fright, or had he hurt himself, that he lay motionless on the sand?

Deborah cast anxious glances all around, but not a human being was in sight, not even a boat! It was at all times a lonely spot, and at this time of evening, so soon to be dark, there was no chance of any one.

She would not turn away without making an effort to help, so she ran quickly to the rocks, which, seen at a certain point, appeared to be connected with the Black Rock, though really a space of twenty feet intervened of sand, now covered with water, for the tide was fast coming in. Deborah did not know exactly where the sand-pool, as they called it, stood:—if it was where the water now washed, or on the side of the rock. When she reached this point, she saw that the man had in fact fallen on a lower ledge of rock and not on the sand. He was insensible, or could it be that he was dead?

At once the strength and activity of her nature asserted itself. She would not let him remain there; she must find a way at least of knowing whether he were past help or not. Her keen glance

perceived that the rocks on which she stood gradually grew lower, with uneven slope, like rough steps.

At this moment the tide was not over the lower step, and it was within four or five feet of the Black Rock: she must jump this. It was the only way, and in another few moments the sea would have come in and made the leap beyond her power. It was slippery from the growth of sea-weed, and, should she miss, besides, the water which looked deep, she dreaded that the sand might not bear her, that there might be the terrible sand-pool she had heard of so often.

She took as firm a foot-hold as she could, and, strange to say, at that moment she thought of Lucy,—and of Lucy's faith and trust in God. "God help me, too," was the cry of her heart; and the hard bitterness which had so long gathered there and silenced any prayer, seemed suddenly broken.

She jumped safely to the rock, and on reaching the prostrate figure, she saw that it was a young man, a stranger to her. She knew, from a slight convulsive movement about the mouth, that he was alive, and from his dress that he was no one of the neighbourhood.

A great pity moved her. Surely he must not die. He looked happy, and life was most likely very sweet for him.

She dipped her hand into the water, now fast rising, and wet his forehead and hands, and soon, with a few painful, gasping sighs, he slowly opened his eyes.

"Who are you? Where am I?" he asked.

"You fell just now, I saw you. Are you hurt or ill? Do you know that this is the Black Rock, and that the tide is already come round us?"

"Ah!" he sighed out, trying to raise himself; "I remember I fell,—desperate slippery place,—yes; here's the blood," and he put his hand to the back of his head; when he withdrew it, there was much blood upon it. "I fell and cut myself, and I hurt my ankle, and was in great pain, and I suppose it made me faint. It is rather a bad trick of mine; but it is very kind of you to come here. I fear it is getting late. I'll try—I wonder—can I manage to hop home?"

"Look!" she said, and pointing to where now the sea had risen, so that it was no longer possible to return by jumping.

"It seems I am caged, then! Black Rock, indeed," he said ruefully; "it is for me—and—you——"

"It is a noted dangerous place, and every one avoids it, not only on account of the tide, but the quicksand. We can't get off now, unless a boat should chance to pass in sight of us; no, not till the tide turns."

"And it is nigh dark now! Pleasant prospect! But what a brute am I? And I have brought you into this scrape! You don't think this rock will——"

He stopped short, looking earnestly at her. She understood his fear.

"No," she said, "I think not; unless in an unusually high tide, this rock is not generally covered. We must climb higher, and remain there. I have often seen the black, jagged peak keeping its head above a rough sea. I have watched the birds on it many a time, but I never thought to see a human being here!"

They moved up the rock which, however bad its fame, was now their only chance of safety.

Deborah did what she could for the man's wound, by binding it in a handkerchief, and washing off the sand; but her fingers were quite

unused to such work. They both in silence looked anxiously around, while yet there was any light, in hopes of discovering a boat, or some late traveller on the cliff.

After a long, fruitless gaze, Deborah said,—

“People don’t come out here at this hour. But, maybe, when it is darker, there may be some one about then. There are the Coastguard folk. I believe now and then they do come as far as this, and our people do, I know. There’s ‘Kit’s Cave’ not so far off, and I believe they pass a night there pretty often when anything is up.”

“Up? Oh, you mean smuggling, I suppose?”

“Yes.”

“And I understand that some time since it was worse fate for a ship to be cast on this shore than to sink out at sea! Last evening, at a wayside inn in which I found a lodging, my blood ran cold, as they say, at the wild tales the master told us. Is it true?”

“Yes, quite true. And I don’t see that Abbeyland people are much better now. They’re a bad lot. And what with Coastguard folk and the village men, it is a terrible place to live in!”

“It must be. Do you live at Abbeyland?”

“Just near it. But,” she added, hastily, “we

only came here lately—that is, I mean, we're not exactly Abbeyland people, though"—and her voice fell, and her face darkened as she stopped short. Again he stood up to look out, and on turning suddenly, he met her eyes fixed on his face, and he said, with an amused smile,—

"Are you wondering if I rose from the sea? Never fear! You might have fallen on ugly company, if all I hear of these parts is true; but I believe I may call myself an honest fellow, and, what's more, not one of the Coastguard—at least, not of the service."

"You are a stranger, I suppose?"

"Quite so. Never saw these parts before, and, but for you, it is just possible I might never have seen them or any other place again."

"Yes, I thought you were dead for a minute or so," she gravely said; "but then, as I looked at you, I thought you seemed too happy to die!"

"Indeed! Well, very lucky it was for me. But how is it you were here alone, and at such an hour? Is it safe?"

"Yes, safe enough. I often walk here when mother is sleeping and my work is done. And one place is as safe as another for me." Her old bitter tone came back for a moment.

He observed it, and looked at her.

"You are not happy, I fear?" he said, half playfully, half seriously.

"No; it is many a long month since I understood the word. I believe I had forgotten there could be such a thing—till—till I saw your face lying there! I had a thought that it might be death—gladness to be free, and out of this bad world. But it wasn't that; and I suppose some persons are happy—some who don't live in misery?"

"Well, certainly, I hope so. And then, even if trouble lies heavily, as it will sometimes, preachers would tell us that there is an end and a reason; wouldn't they?"

"What end? Why does God forget us here if He means to help us one day? Why are bad people allowed their will?"

"What is that?" he asked, quickly, and catching hold of her arm as if to silence her.

Listening intently, they both heard a sound, distant yet distinct—the sound of oars in the ruloes, but they saw no boat. He whistled, and then shouted. A pause, and there came an answering shout. Soon a black object came in sight, though often lost in a wave for an instant,

and then they distinguished a boat and two men in it. They rested on their oars, and called out—

“Who is that calls? Where are you?”

“On the rock—the Black Rock,” shouted the stranger.

“It’s Deborah Clinton,” added the girl, for she recognised the voices only too well.

A loud, rough laugh seemed to break up the stillness, and awake the echoes among the rocks—a laugh which made Deborah’s heart almost stand still, and her limbs to tremble. Then a harsh voice called out,—

“Is this Deb?—Deb Clinton?—our Deb? and in flesh and blood? This is a rare joke! What! you couldn’t be content with a walk in a field or on the shore with your young man? And who is he? Lucky for you and your Joe, my girl, that we chanced to be hereabouts. We hadn’t thought to do so, had we now, Bob? But hold on, lad, and I’ll get the lass down; and you, sir, whoever you be, mind your steps, unless you want to sup with old Nep this dark night.”

This speech was of course ornamented with Mr. Clinton’s favourite oaths. Deborah and her companion remained silent after they were seated in the boat, but the others kept up an incessant

chatter. It was evident that they had not been at home, and so were ignorant of Deborah's absence. A few jokes as to how the old lady would be feeling at being deserted passed, but Deborah made no remark in answer.

As they neared the beach, the stranger spoke low to her,—

“Here we part. I owe you a great debt, but I hope I may see you again soon. I shall be for some little time in this neighbourhood, and—am I not right? do you not live in this cottage?”

“Yes, I live there,” and Deborah jumped on to the shore and walked quickly to the cottage.





CHAPTER VI.

A CHANGE that could not have been explained by her had come to the life of Deborah. It was not any relief from her hard work, for that had been much increased through her mother having broken her arm on the day she was left so long alone while her daughter was on the rock ; nor was it any relief from their poverty, or freedom from anxiety for her father's dangerous life. All these things went on as badly or worse, yet Deborah felt a new hope springing in her life ; and she had something to think of in all that had happened that day.

She had not seen the stranger again, but she remembered that he said he was staying in the neighbourhood, and she could not but hope that in some way or other they would meet again. Then, when day after day passed, and she could not find even a quarter of an hour to leave the cottage and her mother, there was a fear that his visit might have ended, she rested on what had taken place

—his words—his look—his voice;—it was all so bright and so new to her daily experience!

Often when poor Mrs. Clinton was bewailing her hard fate, and predicting terrible things about to happen, Deborah's mind was wandering far away, and she was suddenly roused by her mother asking reproachfully, "What made her smile?"

One evening it was necessary to go to the small druggist's shop in the nearest town to fetch more medicine for Mrs. Clinton, and Deborah promised to walk quickly, but brightened up at the very notion of her walk. Not far from the cottage she met a girl who had been hired to help her through the worst of Mrs. Clinton's illness, and Deborah asked her now to go and sit with her mother during her absence. After her long confinement within the cottage, it seemed very pleasant to be crossing the fields, where tired cattle were lazily going homewards, and a labouring man in his smock bade her "Good evening," glancing aside, with evident curiosity, at "Job Clinton's daughter." White gulls soared heavily over the cliffs seeking their nests. A soft amber light tinted the sea and sky, and on the other side the rising moon appeared.

Deborah turned to give a long look seawards

as she came to a stile, and then, on resuming her way, she saw some one coming along the field path, and she knew at once that it was the stranger.

"Well met!" he said cheerfully. "I began to think I should not see you again."

"I have not been out since," Deborah answered.

"I hope you did not suffer. Did you get a cold or rheumatism?"

She shook her head.

"I was rather bad myself for a day or two," he went on. "That fall had made me so stiff. But if you are walking, let me go with you a little way. You see I ought; I wish to say many things to you. You saved my life, and in story books that always leads to such grand speeches, and wonderful looks, and that style of thing. But seriously, you must not think me a heartless fellow, if I don't say much, for ——"

"The less said the better to please me," she hastily put in. "There is nothing to thank me for. I liked it."

"Liked taking that jump on to the slippery rock! and then staying there with the prospect of the waves mounting higher and higher, and perhaps carrying us both off in triumph! Your taste

is singular, Miss —— but I don't know your name, and you don't know mine."

"I am called Deborah Clinton," she said.

"And I—Henry Manners, at your service," he returned, taking off his hat, and bowing.

Poor Deborah felt a sinking at heart: she felt so dull, so awkward and shabby, and he was so handsome, so bright, and so ready spoken!

"I am staying with a distant cousin of mine, Lieutenant Roberts."

"What! of the Coast-guard? Oh! do you belong to them?" she asked eagerly.

"No, I don't belong to them; but I am on a visit there. You needn't be afraid of me, Miss Deborah."

"I am not afraid; I wish they were all stopped—all the smugglers and the spies too! It is hateful to have this plotting and fighting. I live sometimes in terror of bloodshed, or I grow like a stone, and don't fear or care for anything?"

"Do you mean that your people are——"

"Smugglers! Yes, my father and brother are smugglers, sir," she said bitterly. "Every one is at Abbeyland. They think it no harm, but abuse the spies and the tyrants who are against them."

"They call Preventive Men hard names, do

they? Well, it is their duty, you see. They are paid to stop illegal trading, and of course they must do it. I have thought since I came here it must be rather good fun, the chase and all that."

"Fun! That's only because you've never seen or heard them."

"It must be bad for you," he said kindly. "Can't you get away from it?"

"I ask myself that question always. I have even thought of running away, and I should have done it, but for Lucy."

"Your sister?"

"My dead sister, and she told me to stay with mother. She was the only one who loved me—but she is dead."

"I have neither sister nor brother, father nor mother, but I have kind friends, a good aunt and cousins, who have never let me feel the want of a home," he said.

"And you live with them?"

"Yes; and a pretty place it is."

Deborah sighed. "I knew you were happy, when I saw you lying on the rock. I felt sure you didn't want to die," she said.

"Want to die! What a notion! I should think not! Who would?"

"Who wouldn't? I should say," she exclaimed. "Hundreds of times I've wished to be with Lucy and out of this bad, ugly, puzzling world. How is it that God allows such things? Why does He let a person who does not willingly do wrong, and hates bad ways, and longs for goodness—why does He let such a person be chained down to misery, and never be able to get free? It's hard to believe that a merciful God who is strong and powerful as they say, yet permits all this."

"God's ways are not our ways, and one day we shall see clearly about things which puzzle us now," he said kindly. "It is good for us to have trouble."

"Do you really think that?"

"Yes," he returned. "It helps us to turn to Him, and when once we really learn this, things seem easier to bear. It is only for a time, you see, a short time; and then comes the end—the real life—the true home!"

His reverent voice struck Deborah. It was new to her, and she felt that he was true, and not speaking for effect.

"Ah!" she said presently. "I know nothing of all that. No one ever taught me, and I am sure that God turns away His eyes from such a place as I

live in. Lucy used to talk something as you do. She was happy and good ; and if there is another happier life, I am sure she is there. But she and I are very different."

Talking in this way, they reached the town before Deborah was aware how near they were.

Her companion, seeing Lieutenant Roberts in the street, said he must join him, and would say good-bye now, though he hoped to see her again before very long. Perhaps he might call at her cottage.

But she shook her head, and said, No ; her father didn't like strangers, and no visitors such as he was were welcome there.

Then they parted.

But a sudden impulse caused Deborah, before he joined the Lieutenant, to run back, and laying her hand on his arm, she said, "You don't—you won't—join them, will you? I mean," she added more quietly, seeing his look of surprise—"I mean, don't go out to catch—the—my—Please don't do that! You don't know—you can't tell what may come of it. You might be killed, and by my father or brother ; for they have sworn to revenge all that the Coast-guard have done to their party."

“Yes, my cousin said there was a desperate set. And if you can do any good by saying so, you may just tell them that a strong party will be ready to look after the next venture.”

“I do any good!” She shook her head, and turned away with a sigh, and walked home as fast as she could.





CHAPTER VII.

SEVERAL days passed, and Deborah felt sure that some desperate attempt was to be made to put down the Coast-guard interference. Clinton and Bob were often out all night; and at other times they brought rude, noisy men to the cottage, where something was talked of and planned with secrecy, and where terrible threats were uttered. It was on a Sunday that Deborah, seeing her mother had fallen asleep, felt a longing for a little fresh air, and she unconsciously turned towards the village. Presently she saw the groups coming from church, and then turning off in different directions, and she directly retraced her steps to avoid meeting them. But she was overtaken by her new friend, who seemed anxious to see her.

"You have come from church, I suppose—who was it that preached?" he asked.

"No; I didn't go—I don't know. I never do go," she added.

"Indeed! I should have thought——"

"You don't know me at all!"

"Do you mean you have never been a church-goer?"

"When I was at school, before I came here—and when I lived with my aunt, I used to go. But it never did me any good that I know of—I thought the sermons long and dull."

"But the prayers?" he asked, anxiously.

"I can't honestly say I often attended to them, though I liked the Psalms and the Lessons—sometimes. But it always seemed to me humbug for us to go, and only fit for good people. Lucy used to like it, I know."

"That is a new notion to me. If only the good are to go, I fear that very few are fit."

"No; there seem very few; and really, till I met you, I began to think there was not one good person left."

"What can you know of me?"

"Nothing. I know nothing, but I can guess: and I always do guess about every one I see."

"I wish I could persuade you to go to church."

"Where would be the gain? Here I am hedged in by bad people—kept alone and miser-

able by their practices. Perhaps I was born with a hard heart, as poor mother often says, and it seems to grow harder and harder. I don't feel pity when wicked, coarse people suffer ; and I had nearly forgotten the feeling of liking or loving any one. It is such dreary work ! When I go to bed, I dread the morning and long to run away. But, tell me—What's the use of going to church ? ”

“ For one thing, to learn our duty, I suppose ; and then, don't you know the verse—‘ When two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them. ’ A blessing is promised to us if we meet to pray. And we are told expressly to worship the Lord. Even the poor savages seem to have a notion of doing honour to their gods, and join in some kind of public worship. ”

Deborah covered her face with her hands, “ If I could feel this, perhaps I might be different. You ought to be happy to have been taught all this. ”

“ Yes, I ought, indeed ; I have had a good and happy home, though I, too, have felt lonely. ”

“ Oh, have you ? ”

And long after they had parted, she wished she could shelter him from loneliness, or any other

ill. She repeated all he had said, and it threw a new light on the past, and made her think that perhaps much that was bad in her life was partly owing to some neglect of her own. When in another and better home, had she ever valued her privileges, or thought of pleasing God in her actions? Now an eager wish arose, that she could be better—that she might rise a little out of the degradation which surrounded her. But on returning home, the old feeling of hardness returned. Unless she actually ran away, she could do nothing.

The little room that night was full of men. They called for spirits, and drank deeply, and then they forgot their usual reserve, and uttered threats against the spies and tyrants, and drank success to the coming venture, and death to their enemies. At last Deborah could no longer keep silent.

“I suppose,” she said, in a sharp, clear voice, and tremulous, too, “that you know that I hear all you say—Yes! and I understand it, too! But take warning! The Lieutenant up there has mustered a strong party, and has got plenty more fire-arms. It will go hard with you this time!”

A burst of laughter greeted her. Some one mimicked her voice and manner.

"Good little girl, she is so wise! Clinton, your daughter is warning us—do you hear?"

"I hear, and I warn her too. Deb, you think I don't know the new friendship you've struck up! But I do! I wish the fool had been left to perish, and you, too, before he came here with his nonsense. Anyway, I know the chap's face, and if we come to close quarters, he shall know me! A pretty thing for a man's daughter to be keeping company with one of the spies!"

Deborah made no answer, and soon left the room, preferring to sit alone in her own little chamber, where, without a light, she kept a watch at the window, waiting till they should all go. At last she heard her father's voice calling for her—

"You needn't be on the look-out, Deb, till you see us as big as life—perhaps one time, perhaps another—there's no saying the hour or the day. And look! here's some of King George's heads, in case you're out of victuals. I say, Deb," and he laid his heavy hand on her shoulder, and lowered his voice, "are you timid of biding here with only the poor old lady? For one of the village women would lend her company, I guess; and this time there's no telling when we come back, if ever we do. And now I'm off, and if you like you may

wish us good luck in the sharpest venture we've had for many a night."

Afterwards she remembered the kinder tone of his voice with pleasure: she had noted that it trembled just a little, and his hand had pressed on her with a lingering touch, too!

"Oh, Deb, Deb!" wailed her mother, as she returned to the cottage, "I seem to see blood whenever I shut my eyes! Child, I know something is up, by father's way. He was a trifle like his old self of former years! Oh, dear! oh, dear! to think of that time and now! And Bob's heart must be made of iron; for he shook me off when I went to touch his hand just as if I was a reptile—he did!"





CHAPTER VIII.

THREE days passed, and no one had come near the solitary cottage. The weather had been what was called in Abbeyland "dirty;" the wind gusty and fitful, and the sea and landscape blotted out by heavy mists. Deborah felt the stillness oppressive, and there was a new sensation of restlessness which at last drove her to put on her shawl, pinning it over her head, and to stroll out, without any settled purpose as to where she should go.

But, after wandering a little on the beach, she bethought herself that she had better fetch some yeast for the morrow's baking. There was a small public-house not far off, where she might supply herself. Fetching a jug, therefore, she turned inland; and as she came back again she heard hoarse voices calling, and saw people waving their hands.

"Poor lass, I'm sorry for you," said one elderly woman, as Deborah passed her. "If you are

proud, trouble will bring it down. And trouble lies in your path now, I guess. The wicked varmint! Calling themselves 'king's men' too! As if King George would wish his subjects to be shot down for bringing back a drop of gin or a bit of tea cheap to their lawful families?"

Deborah hastened onwards, and at the end of the street she met a litter carried by some of the villagers, and beside it walked the stout Coast-guardsmen, armed to the teeth. Other men followed with chains on their wrists, and closely guarded. As yet Deborah recognised no one; but, as she drew nearer to her own home, on the beach she saw two or three boats drawn up on the shore, in which men were lying; others sat or lay about; and she heard, clear and strong, the voice of Lieutenant Roberts, giving orders, and she saw that he had his left arm in a sling.

"Deb! Deb!" she heard; and looking round she saw her father beckoning to her in an awkward way with both hands. She went to him. Two Preventive men were holding him, and his wrists were chained together; blood streaked his face, and was on his shirt, but he looked exultant, and laughed.

"Here am I, like a trussed chicken! Well,

well! 'Tis up and down in the course of things, and I've had my wish. I reckon I've left my mark on his Majesty's servants; and if I must pay the piper, I am ready. Now, Deb, be quick, for I've only a minute. Say goodbye, girl! Don't cry now! You are brave; and I'm thinking I might have made more of ye. If I'd been lucky, I'd have come back and lived quiet a bit perhaps, but Fate is against me! Tell the old lady so! Stoop close, Deb — secret!"

And he whispered that in a certain jar she would find in a stocking something she might take.

She suggested his needing it himself, but he shook his head.

"No, it's hanging, or a lifer with me; I did it! And, of course, being caught, I must pay. But I'm not ashamed. Our brave boys did all that flesh and blood could do, but they were double our number, and better armed. I reckon there's a few of them will remember us for a long time;" and he laughed.

Deborah asked for Bob. Her father's voice shook a little:—

"Bob lies in that boat yonder. Poor fellow, he's out of it all. He fought like a tiger. Ask that fellow who was with you on the rock.



For our trouble in saving him he paid us by joining the spies, when he had no call to. Well! he got served out, he did. Bob felled him down; and it was nigh all over with him, for my blood was up, and I had my pistol; but, just then, some one cut down the poor boy. Bob fell on me. I out with my knife, and struck about as well as I could, with Bob on my knee. I guess my knife left a pretty reminder of Job Clinton, and spoilt his beauty somewhat. And my last words to you, Deb, is this: Have nothing to say to spies or Coast-guard rascals! Don't be friendly with sneaking lubbers, who fight your own lawful father, and killed poor Bob. And now, maybe I've not been a model parent exactly, but I shall darken your life no more; and so, goodbye; and down with the Coast-guard!"

As he spoke the last words, he was lifted into a cart, where, with two others—one groaning from pain, and unable to sit up at all—he was made fast. They drove away. Deborah watched the cart and its escort of armed men, as it wound round the hill path, and then she turned towards the cottage; but, before entering, she caught sight of a group of men standing round a shapeless heap that made her shudder. She thought she



saw the Lieutenant climbing the cliff path, returning to his wife at last. But his cousin, Henry Manners, where was he? and how serious was the cut her father confessed to have given to him! It was all so sudden — this terrible news — after the complete solitude and silence. And then there was her poor, feeble, mother's grief to come, whose shawl-covered head she saw even now above the blind in the broken window. Yes, Mrs. Clinton had slept through the noise and bustle of the landing, and the girl, only too glad to be at liberty to look about, did not wake her. But now she guessed from Deborah's face that there had been tidings, and she was prepared for the worst.

"And he's gone! gone at last! without one word for me, his wife! Well, Job Clinton, no one can say I've not done my duty by you, and you've led me a hard life! I warned him scores of times! But I might as well talk to the high-tide. And Bob—where's the lad, Deborah?"

"Mother, he'll never hurt you more with his hard words: his time is over."

"Dead! My boy, my poor lad, killed!"

And the mother's grief was loud and long. Only once Deborah paused in kneading her bread, and said,—

"One would suppose he had been a dutiful son to hear you, mother. I wouldn't say so much, if I were you. Such grief as ours is best trodden down and hidden away."

"Grief! You've no feeling, Deb; not a scrap. There, you go on making the bread, as if nothing was amiss!"

"We must eat though death comes," she answered. "I can't say I lose much in losing Bob; but to say I am not sorry, is not true. It is all bad, and I see no end of it. This way of living has not only brought misery and harm to them, but on us."





CHAPTER IX.

It was a still, cold afternoon. The fogs had cleared away, and the air was keen. The waves dashed on the pebbles, but above their splash could plainly be heard the solemn tones of the church-bells, tolling for the dead! Labourers in the inland fields paused to hearken and say "Poor fellows!" and a long procession of Abbeyland people had gathered together, and were winding up the hill, women and children bringing up the rear.

Mrs. Clinton had fretted till Deborah consented to go with her to see "her poor boy laid by Lucy;" and now, as they joined the hindmost followers, they heard a whispered remark of surprise that Lieutenant Roberts and his young wife should be at the funeral. Again there was wonder at seeing, instead of the familiar face of their clergyman, a stranger who, when the last notes of the hymn died away, which it was the village custom to sing

at the grave, desired the people to remain while he said a few words.

By the graves, his earnest voice retained them to hear solemn words of warning and advice. "Four of them had died a violent death, three being struck down while breaking the law, and consequently displeasing the Almighty God." And then he spoke of the ill name the village had earned, and of the idle and rude life generally led there. They persuaded themselves that smuggling was no sin—"no sin in God's sight"—but our Saviour told His followers to obey the laws, even should they be oppressive. Submission to authority was one of the great features of the Gospel law. In all civilized countries there must be laws made by the few for the many, for the protection of property. All this resisting the law of the land led to violence and wrong. These very men, just laid in the grave, were suddenly summoned into God's presence when their hearts were full of anger and revenge, and evil words on their lips. Others were at this moment awaiting their trial in the prison. Fathers, husbands, sons, taken from their families, perhaps never to return; perhaps to suffer a shameful death. He said he was a stranger to them, summoned there because of the

sickness unto death of their own pastor. Yes, the clergyman who had lived so many years among them lay dying, and on his bed of pain he was praying that this awful occasion might at last strike home to the hearts of his flock. They had turned away from his teaching often, but he had now sent a message of farewell, and also of solemn warning to them to repent and lead a better life.

Even as these words were spoken there was a stir among the crowd, and a whisper went round that tidings from the Parsonage had come, and that the old Minister was dead !

The Abbeyland people were not a church-going set in general, but they had liked and respected their clergyman, who had never failed them in the hour of distress and trial. Amid their lawless ways they were easily moved to grief or anger, and also to kindness, in a certain fashion. And many an act of kindness most of them had received from him who had just left them. As these thoughts filled their hearts, the silence was broken by women's sobs or low-spoken regrets.

When all the crowd had left the churchyard, Deborah lingered looking at the Coast-guard party, but the one she sought was not among them. The thought flashed across her, " Was he

dead, or dying?" She had not heard the name of the Coast-guard men just buried, and she shuddered at recalling her father's words. But now her mother needed her attention, and to her she could not speak of this anxiety.





CHAPTER X.

MRS. CLINTON wished to leave the lonely cottage, if another could be found that they could afford, but Deborah was strangely unwilling to change.

There was much consultation as to how they were to gain a livelihood, for the little money found by Deborah in her father's secret hoard would not last long, after defraying the expense of poor Bob's funeral.

Deborah tried to get plain work in the neighbourhood, but she was rather slow at it, and earned but little. She disliked the confinement, and the sitting so long wearied her: an active life was more to her taste. But if she spoke of going out to service her mother complained of being deserted, so she stayed on in the old place; yet it was not a happy life, and though she did now try to strive against it, her temper was irritable, and she was often quick and impatient with her mother.

She avoided the village, but in different ways she had heard vague and contradictory reports that one of the Coast-guard party was badly wounded. Some said it was one of the officers, others only a visitor there. Deborah coupled the rumour with the fact of never meeting her friend anywhere, and believed he must be hurt and ill. Once when she mentioned her fear to her mother, Mrs. Clinton grumbled much at her daughter's caring for one of the people who had wronged them, and got her husband into trouble, besides being the death of her only son.

"You forget, mother, how often you have reproached father with going against law and putting himself and Bob in the way of being hurt and punished. It is the duty of the Preventive men to stop smuggling."

"It isn't their duty to kill people. And for you to be friendly with any of them is hard-hearted and unfeeling,—undutiful, I call it."

"Well, I never was reared in duty," was the not very respectful answer; and then Deborah's tears fell on her work, till she was forced to put it away, though she wanted to finish it and get paid for it.

While standing to recover herself at the win-

dow which looked seawards, her mother grumbled at her wasting time. "We live hard enough, I'm sure, but we'll have to starve unless you are more industrious, Deb. Sure you are a queer girl, and a great trial to me."

"You make me bad, mother! Strive as I may, you always provoke me."

"O Deb, Deb! ungrateful girl! But here's some one wanting you."

Deborah turned and saw a boy at the door, who said he had been sent "by the folk lodging up at the sexton's, by the church—Miss Clinton was wanted there immediately."

"What for? Who wants me?"

"The fellow who is ill there. And the woman there sent me to fetch you to speak with him."

"Prospect Place" had often attracted Deborah's notice in her rambles towards the churchyard. She admired the tidy garden and the trailing honeysuckle and Virginian creeper, which covered the porch and all the front wall. At the low green gate was standing a fair, fresh-coloured girl, well dressed and humming a tune while she tied up a few flowers. She looked up as Deborah approached, with a surprised gaze, which brought the colour on Deborah's cheeks, and she

instinctively drew her faded, thin shawl tighter over her arms and bit her lips, remembering her own shabby appearance.

The lad nodded. "Please, Miss, she's come."

"What! is this ——"

"Deborah Clinton is my name," quickly and coldly Deborah said. "Have you sent for me?"

"I beg your pardon. Yes. Please come in, for my poor cousin has eagerly asked for you. This way, if you please."

Deborah half thought of running away again, but the suppressed sound of a voice she well knew stayed her steps.

"Mother, *she's* come," said the girl.

"Ask her to come here. Miss Clinton! come in," said Henry Manners, from an inside room.

Deborah saw a pale, wan face on the pillow, and half drew back in doubt, till a smile reassured her. "Yes! now I see it is you!" she said, advancing. "But you are changed. You must have been very ill."

"So you have forgotten me! That's very wrong after our adventure. I did think you would care enough just to ask after the life you saved. You have taken some conceit out of me."

"Henry, you must not talk much! Remember your promise," said an elderly woman, who was seated at the foot of the bed.

"No, aunt—mum is the word. I mean Deborah to do all the talking. I may say 'Deborah,' mayn't I?"

"Call me what you please. Are you getting better?" Deborah managed to say, but she was much moved and shaken, and she wished the aunt would go away, for she could not not speak openly before her.

"Yes, young woman, he is getting over it at last. But he has had much suffering. It is a lesson to all you people connected in this horrid trade. If my nephew had died, your father would have been hanged, and deserved it too."

"It was a fair fight, aunt. I had no business there, and I am well served out."

"Why did you go? I begged you not," Deborah said.

"Hands were wanted, and I could not stay at home when my cousin went. But let us talk of something else."

"Is it true your brother is ——" Henry began.

"Bob is dead," she quickly put in; "father's

gone to prison, and they say will be sent away for life."

"And you?"

"I am still in the cottage with mother."

"I have thought of you often. Why did you not come here?"

"Why should I?"

"Why? because we are friends."

"But since then your blood has been shed by my father's hand. We are openly disgraced now. Even those who joined in the smuggling and upheld us before, now it is come to prison, they scorn us! Besides, I didn't know where you were; I could hear nothing about you at all."

"That is odd. I was rather ill at first, I believe, and this arm" (pointing to the broken limb) "will never be strong again. And my cousin sent for my good aunt. She and Letty have taken possession since, and have nursed me devotedly. But nurses are natural-born tyrants, and I dare not call my limbs my own. Deborah! I wanted to write and say just a few words—just to say, I bore no ill-will or anger towards your father; and I wanted you to say, you would not hate me—but ——"

"*I hate you?* Why should I?"

“ Well—for going against your people. But how is it with you now? I fear not very well, is it? You don't mind telling me of your prospects, do you? Are you left pretty well—comfortably provided for?”

“ We have not one shilling but what I can earn by plain sewing. But it is not the poverty I mind so much. That is, I could put up with that, if other things were different, but——Oh, *you* cannot understand my life! But I must get used to it, I suppose, at last; only, will it go on always—till I am old or dead, I wonder?”

“ Let us hope not. Is it your father's condition which weighs on your mind, or the public talk?”

“ Yes, the disgrace! It eats into me! I feel I don't deserve it—that I am as good as others who look down on me. If only I had good clothes! I saw what your cousin thought just now.”

“ What! Letty? Never mind her, she is a mere child—she means well. You have no notion how anxious she has been to see you, and she has taken my part and persuaded her mother ——”

“ Yes, I saw she—your aunt does not approve of my coming.”

“ She won't mind now. Don't think anything

of her grave, stiff manner. It is her way. She is good, but strict. She has been a mother to me."

"And you, a son to her?"

"Well—yes—in one sense, but not in another—not in the sense she would wish, I fear," he added, colouring a little. "And how does your mother bear up?" he added kindly.

"Mother doesn't 'bear up' at all. She sinks down too much. She is always grieving."

"Poor soul! What a comfort you must be to her!"

"No, I am not. I worry her; I am a bad daughter, very. Yet I try hard now—I do indeed; since I knew you, and ——"

"In what way does your knowing me influence you so?"

"Because it has made me feel how bad I was—how wicked I have been. Lucy used to make me feel ashamed of my temper, and she asked me to take care of mother. It is hard to be patient and gentle."

"Henry! you have talked enough," said his aunt coming to the door.

"Yes," said Deborah hurriedly, and rising from her seat. "And I must go at once."

"You must come again. Aunt, tell her to come

soon : and, Letty, you will like to walk with Deborah towards the shore, won't you ?”

Letty was tying on her bonnet, and graciously signified her intention of accompanying Deborah part of the way. She stepped back for Deborah to pass, which she did, looking grave and cold, but Henry stopped her.

“Going without shaking hands ! That's scarcely kind or friendly. And—here—I want you to take this book and read it. A favourite of mine, and when you come next we'll talk over what we like best. Your mother will like you to say or sing them.”

Deborah caught a reproving look and a shake of the head from the aunt, but she would not give up the book.

“He looks very bad, doesn't he ?” asked Letty as they walked on.

“Very ; he is much altered.”

“Do you think that gash will always show ? That will be too horrid ! and it is lucky that it is the left arm, for the doctor thinks it will always be stiff. What a cruel man your father must be ! Poor Henry, too, so good-looking as he was ! It is a great trouble to me.”

“You must be very fond of him,” Deborah said.

"Oh, yes; we love each other truly. From childhood we have been sweethearts, you see. He's not rich, of course, for uncle lost all he had nearly, and after his death my father took Harry and paid his schooling. But you see money isn't everything, is it? Happiness don't stay altogether with money, and feelings must be considered, and then I couldn't bear to disappoint him, particularly now after his illness. But I hope that cut won't disfigure him! or the arm prevent his working."

"Who would mind that? And is he very fond of you?" Deborah could not help asking wistfully, and looking more attentively at Letty's grey eyes and flaxen curls, her handsome purple merino dress and delicate collar, her well-arranged shawl and pretty bonnet. Yes, so far as the outside went, she was suited to him; yet the face, and more than that, the voice, did not please Deborah. It jarred on her, and she felt that Letty was not equal to Henry Manners. She scarcely heeded all the trifling chatter Letty kept up about her home, and all the compliments paid her at divers times. Deborah was trying to think of his life and home with this cousin and aunt. And then she rested on her own life—her home—her dress, and wondered painfully if he saw all the dismal contrast.

"He is so particular, so difficult to be pleased, you've no idea," she heard Letty saying, "Hardly anything pleases him. Lieutenant Roberts hopes to get him into some shipping house as clerk on board a steamer; just what he likes, for Harry is clever enough. But he will have to be often away, and his pay at first won't be large. I do hate a mean style of living! Solicitor Brown keeps a gig and a tiger, and ——"

"A tiger! for what?"

"To wait dinner and hold his horse, to be sure! And he's a very handsome man, only he flatters so! But there are stories as to his having a passionate temper, and I know poor Harry's temper so well, you see. I wonder, if you were in my place, if you'd have Harry or Mr. Brown, now?"

"How can you hesitate a moment, that is, if you have really the power of choosing?"

"Well, I never! Of course I have. But what place is that? Does any one live in that tumble-down shed? and so close to the sea!"

"I live there," Deborah said coldly, and added, "You had better turn back now."

"No, I want to see your place and your mother! Harry said it was a queer hole for human beings to live in. I suppose it is convenient for

that horrid smuggling. How can you bear it all? I shouldn't! I should run away. It's so dreadful to be talked of so, and asked about."

"Not pleasant certainly. But every one can't choose."

"You look so high and haughty, too!" said the girl, glancing at Deborah. "So like what he described—wouldn't you like me to tell you what he said to me and mother, now? Henry said you were different from other girls, and so you are—only—I did expect—he is always so particular as to dress, and ——"

"You thought he couldn't care to speak to any one so shabbily dressed as I am?"

"But if you are poor you can't help it of course. I should dislike to be poor!"

"Few would like it, I suppose. But now we are here. Will you go back or rest on this boat a little?"

"I want to see your mother and your home. Ah! there she is at the window and beckoning to you." And in spite of Deborah's hints and her cold welcome, Letty would go to the cottage door, and introduced herself as "Henry Manners' cousin."

Mrs. Clinton wanted her tea, and had fretted

at Deborah's absence. She looked surprised at this visitor, but did not recognise the name. Any change was welcome however, and, with profuse apologies for her old dress and the empty hearth, she asked how long Letty had been in Abbeyland, and other questions.

Deborah left them talking and went to prepare the tea. She found her mother quite cheerful and with actually a smile on her face at Letty's chatter; while Letty pressed her to tell her more stories of smuggling adventures, and liked hearing the history of Mrs. Clinton's former life.

The time slipped away, and Mrs. Clinton sipped her tea with a relish, while Letty said the bread was delicious, and so on.





CHAPTER XI.

"SHE's a genteel girl, Deborah, and I hope she'll come again; but I did hope that young fellow up there was going to be your sweetheart."

"I thought you were angry at my calling him even a friend."

"Oh, but, it's our duty to forget and forgive! And they're none of the needy, low lot of this place! They're like my acquaintance in old days. To think what we're sank down to! Her merino cost at least seven shillings a-yard, and she had on a Tuscan straw. They turn and clean beautiful. But, as I said, I hoped you would have a sweetheart at last — and now ——"

"Well, what has caused you to lose that hope, mother?" Deborah asked with a careless smile.

"She says she and him—that's her cousin—and your friend, Henry Manners, have kept company for a long time. So, you've lost that chance!"

This conversation took place some two or three days after Letty's first visit.

Christmas had passed, and Deborah had often been to Prospect Place. Her step was lighter and more springy, her face softer and less anxious.

Even Mrs. Clinton noticed a change, and secretly rejoiced. Deborah's voice sounded cheerful and pleasant now, over her work, and she seldom gave short, sharp answers.

The aunt had argued eagerly with her nephew on the impropriety of his friendship with a smuggler's daughter,—the child of the very man who had wounded him, and was now a convict! Then, finding him firm on the point, she consoled herself with thinking that the girl was too plain to win his heart, and that, after all, it was only friendship, and would not interfere with Letty's interests: but she wished Henry would get well. She wished to go to her home, yet did not like to leave him by himself.

Meanwhile, Deborah was not slow to take Letty's broad hints, though Letty flattered herself she gave them so skilfully and delicately; but, as days passed and Deborah came no more to Prospect Place, and Henry expressed his surprise and annoyance, then Letty was afraid it had been too marked and abrupt a change, and she ran one morning to the Beach Cottage, and asked why Deborah didn't come to see them?

"You let me understand my visits were unwelcome," Deborah answered bluntly.

"I never said unwelcome! You have been offended at my plain speaking, and there's Henry quite in a passion with me and mother, and really you must come and pacify him, and invent some excuse. Will you, there's a good girl?"

"I can't invent; and, indeed, it is best for me to stay away. It will pass, and he will forget me; and you and your mother will feel easy. I am quite aware of all that is said of me, and what your mother thinks."

"You do say such blunt things; and it is very cross of you, Deb; and he is angry; and it is very ungrateful of you; mother says so."

"Does she? I can't help that; but I am not

ungrateful for some things, and you may tell your cousin so. No! but say nothing about it. The blessings will fall back on his own head, I feel sure; and in my prayers he shall never be left out."





CHAPTER XII.

No sooner was Letty gone, and out of sight, than Deborah's composure gave way; and, going out to where an old broken boat lay rocking in the tide, she covered her face and wept bitterly.

"Misfortunes never come singly," is the saying, and so Deborah thought; for her work had been found fault with, and she had lost a customer; and already her list of employers was small, and the pay very scanty. Her mother's rheumatism required warm clothing, too, and it was clear Deborah must try some other way of earning money.

Mrs. Clinton could not bear poverty, and she knew even better than her daughter that there would be a difficulty in the way of gaining a livelihood, owing to the ill reputation of the father.

Deborah's proud, brave spirit was bowed down very low just now; and she had no one; no friend

to give her sympathy and help. None? Yes; she had begun to learn where she might always turn; where, on asking help, she would never be denied; where, on craving for pity and comfort, she would have it freely and fully. Earthly friends might fail; but there was One Friend whose face would never be hidden. To Him now, at this troubled moment, Deborah did turn in her heart. In tears she begged for help and grace; and there, in the old boat, on the lonely beach, she offered a prayer for herself and for her parents; her father, so far away, and so long without the thought of God in his heart; her mother, so weak and feeble; for the kind friend, sent to point out the path to her. And then, infinitely comforted, she raised her head and began to think what she could do. If she could only get away from the place for a time! Suddenly she remembered hearing that the clergyman had inquired for a young woman capable of acting as a waiting-maid on his invalid sister. Deborah had heard the mistress of the grocer's shop speak of this; and she resolved to go at once and see if she could get this situation.

That night, on helping her mother to bed, Deborah told her she was going away to be a servant to a sick lady. She should gain good

wages, most of which she could send back to her mother.

“And leave me to die alone?”

“No, you will live at old Mrs. Johns’, at the shop; a cheerful, pleasant place, mother; and Mrs. Johns is a kind, motherly body. I’ve settled to pay her for you monthly; and you’ll lose your rheumatics, away from this damp place.”

At last, Mrs. Clinton allowed herself to be coaxed and persuaded into doing what she had long desired, and was settled as a lodger in Mrs. Johns’ small back parlour, behind the little china-shop. The old cottage was left, and their furniture bought up by the landlord. With this money Deborah paid Mrs. Johns a week in advance, and left what would procure a good flannel petticoat and a gown for her mother. Then she had wherewith to pay her own journey, and to renew her shabby wardrobe when once she arrived at her new home. She was in a hurry to get away quietly, and luckily the lady (Miss Sinclair) was in a hurry to be suited. For once this step was taken, without all the village being aware of it. And great was the surprise, and loud the remarks, when Mrs. Clinton was found sitting in Mrs. Johns’ parlour and Deborah Clinton gone.



CHAPTER XIII.

A BITING, pitiless east wind was driving up clouds of dust in the little village of Abbeyland, where the vicar might be seen calling from door to door ; for, unlike his predecessor, who had grown old, and inclined not to interfere actively with his strange flock, this new clergyman was unceasing in his efforts to convince them of the evil of smuggling. But he found it a difficult task, for scarcely any of them allowed that they were smugglers. Each had an ostensible trade, and appeared much surprised when he was supposed to be engaged in any other undertaking. Fishing expeditions were talked of, and a whole set of signs, as well as a language of their own, enabled them to carry on their plans without betraying themselves. But smuggling was dying out of itself, and old men lamented the degeneracy of the present time, when the young lads preferred lub-

berly, sneaking trades, to the exciting, dangerous ventures *they* had delighted in. The Coastguard force was strengthened, and the watch so vigilant all along the coast, that the smugglers found it hard and dangerous work. Since the capture of "Clinton's venture" there had been another fierce fight, in which lives were lost on both sides. It stirred up bad blood between the Preventive men and the villagers. Things were hardly comfortable at Abbeyland, and a knot of women were gathered round Mrs. Johns' door, talking over village politics with eager mystery, when a woman, dressed in black, looking very different from the Abbeyland people, breasted the keen wind, and walked quickly towards the gossips.

"Well! I never! Is the sky going to fall?" "It's Deborah Clinton, I declare!" were the various exclamations; and Deborah herself came to the door, after three months' absence, looking ill and grave. She was tired, she said, and glad to take the half-broken stool in Mrs. Johns' shop, while the mistress went, as she said, to awake Mrs. Clinton, who was having her afternoon nap.

"For, poor thing, she has failed much, and isn't long for this world," Mrs. Johns said. "But how is it you are back, girl, without any warning

either? Didn't you like your place yonder, or have you been ill, or what?"

"I couldn't stay," Deborah answered shortly, and leaned her head on her hand. Presently she asked, "Is there any change here? I mean any one gone, or come, or married?"

Mrs. Johns laughed and said, "No; but there was talk of a gay wedding to come off, some place away, between that pretty girl and her cousin, who met with an accident here. They were acquaintances of yours, Deborah?"

She nodded; and then saying that she heard her mother moving, she went up-stairs to her.

"Yes, mother, I am come back. I've had a bad time I can tell you. But it is no use trying; the world's right against me, or any one connected with this hateful place. Miss Sinclair let me stay with her just while she was looking out for some one else. I did the work; it wasn't that! But when she inquired for my 'character,' and I had to tell her where I came from, and all about it, she turned against me, and wondered how the vicar could ever have supposed she would keep a smuggler's daughter! She was sure I had learnt plenty of bad ways, and I believe she was afraid I would rob her, poor lady. When I left Miss

Sinclair, I took the situation of barmaid at a public-house—and I kept the accounts—it was hateful; but I went on, because this place was hateful too, and I didn't care much where I was, or what I did."

"You wrote you had good wages, Deb; and now I suppose we shall have to starve again; but, for any sake, don't let us go back to the beach. I couldn't bear it, Deb!"

"Yes, the pay wasn't bad, and I went on, because I knew you were well off here. But one day, a man came in to the bar, and got drinking; and then he said he knew me by my likeness to Job Clinton. And from that he went on about father, and said so much of us and our ways, I couldn't hold up my head. And from that day I had a miserable life, for people thought they might take liberties with me; and when I complained to the master, he grinned in my face, and insulted me, and asked what I expected? And all this because father chose to keep such low company. What have I done to be so disgraced? God forgive me, though, for I know I deserve it all."

Here the poor girl burst into a fit of crying. She was exhausted, and had been much tried.

"What will become of us!" exclaimed Mrs. Clinton. "I'll have to go to the workhouse, I suppose; but my time can't be long now."

"I shall be left alone then!" remarked Deborah, bitterly.

"And that won't be any grief to you," said her mother, fretfully.

"Mother, don't let us quarrel; I am very weary."

And, indeed, she was not only weary, but ill; and for some weeks Deborah lay on Mrs. Johns' little bed, hovering between life and death.





CHAPTER XIV.

DEBORAH's strong constitution struggled through the fever; and as soon as she could manage to get out and inhale the fresh sea-breeze, she rapidly gained strength. It was all needed, for her mother had another fit and never spoke again. After three nights' watching by her side, Deborah thought her mother wanted to speak, and bent low to her to listen. She understood her to say,—“Kiss me!” and pressed her lips on her mother's cold and damp forehead. A struggling sigh was heaved, and then all was over, and Deborah felt indeed alone in the world!

Many a scheme was proposed and given up, and Deborah felt very anxious about her future. She wished to work, but who would employ her? All the doubts and refusals hurt her pride. If she could only hide herself from every one! Life seemed hard and gloomy, and she was young, too!

Sitting one evening in early summer by Lucy's

grave, she gave way to these thoughts. She went back to the day she met Henry Manners on the Black Rock, and wondered, with a sad heart, what had become of him—not even the sexton had heard of his lodgers after they left him. Every one said he was married to his cousin. The mother had spoken of it as arranged long before.

Deborah was bound to accept the tidings, though something in her own mind made her doubtful as to Henry's wishing to marry his cousin.

"Why had he never written, if he could not come to see her?" He was like all the rest of the world—insincere, untrue. It was only another of her day-dreams. But she was older now; too old to dream any more. She must face life in earnest, and give up wishing for impossible things. Work, work! as God's servant, having no abiding city here, but looking for her home and rest hereafter. In a little time, it would all seem as a "tale that is told."

Thinking and resolving thus, she heard the churchyard gate open and shut; but it was pleasant there, and she need not move away yet. She wondered if her father was still alive, and if he would ever come home.

"I thought I might find you here, as they told me you had gone out," a voice said, which made her start and tremble, for she was not yet quite strong. "Well, have I scared you! Haven't you a word for me?" said Henry Manners. "What a long time it seems since you and I met in that strange way on the rock! But you are grown thinner and paler. You have been ill!"

"Are you quite recovered?" she at last managed to ask, looking in his face.

"Ah, you are seeking my mark. Here it is! Rather injures my good looks, doesn't it? Letty thinks it dreadful—ghastly! Poor girl, she quite shivered at it."

"Is your aunt well, and—and—your ——" stammered Deborah.

"What! Letty? They are quite well, I believe. But I haven't seen them very lately. I have a situation in one of the shipping-houses in London. I went one voyage as clerk, but it made me so ill I was glad to exchange for a stay-at-home berth."

"Do you live in Londoh?"

"Yes, in a noisy street, up four pair of stairs, where I command a lovely and extensive view of my neighbours' chimney-pots. But it's not so bad



as you may think. This is delightful—so quiet and fresh! Suppose we exchange news?" And he seated himself on the grass near her.

She told him in her brief way of her mother's illness and death, and of her attempt at service, and failure, which made him frown and flush up. Then he got up and said hurriedly,—

"Let us go down to the beach; I shall then feel it is you yourself. I feel so mad against myself and with aunt, and Letty, too! But what can a fellow do who has been brought into subjection by leeches, blisters, and lotions, bed and gruel! I was bound hand and foot! And when they told me you were actually gone, and they didn't know where and couldn't find out, or rather *wouldn't*, I raged a little. But then came my appointment, and other things. I had to go to London, and aunt was very angry with me. Come, let us go on."

They reached the shore. The old cottage had a deserted look, even more forlorn than when the Clintons lived there. No one would rent it, for a report was rife that it was haunted. But a summer evening's sunshine can turn even a tumble-down cottage into something pretty, and soft lichens gave the rotten thatch a grace, while a

sturdy bramble threw its long arms, ornamented with delicate leaves, all crimped and pointed, round the broken paling. A cat stole swiftly over the low wall in search of prey, and some swallows twittered as they fed their young under the eaves.

The perfect stillness made it hard to realise the sounds and sights of rude violence which not long ago had grieved Deborah on this very spot.

The sea had scarcely a ripple, and gently lapped the shore with a soothing rush, very different from the high, roaring waves she had so often watched.

"Isn't it pretty?" she observed, looking around with a pleasure she did not care to hide. "After all I like the place, if only ——"

"But you won't mind leaving it, I hope?"

"I shall not leave. I tried it, and it failed. No, they know the worst about me, and all about it, here—and here I'll remain. I had rather live ever so hard, than be scorned and looked down upon."

"But you will not be scorned."

"Yes, my name is disgraced; so they say. It is a hard world, and if once you are down, it won't let you rise again; it drives people to sin, and won't let them try to do well."

"You must change your name," he said gently,

and taking her hand, he drew it on to his arm. "Deborah, I came here on purpose to ask you to do this—to take my name. Did you suppose I shouldn't seek you as soon as I could; as soon as I had something to marry on? I wanted to ask you before, but you were scared away I know by poor Aunt and Letty. But I determined to come and find you. I trusted you—you did not believe in me."

"I had no right to do so," she answered. "They talked—they told me——" but she stopped, not liking to betray Letty.

"I know!" he said. "I know all about it. But it was a mistake. And, after all, aunt is much better pleased as it is, and Letty will soon marry a rich tradesman. Poor aunt was good to me, and ready to overlook my poverty. But it did not suit me, you see, and I wasn't to be driven against my will into marriage."

"But are you sure you will never repent asking me," said Deborah, "when you are reminded of my father and poor brother?"

"You shall ask me that some years hence," he said. "And as to faults, we will both try to help each other to live for that other Home, Deborah!"

Before the corn was carried around Abbeyland,

there was a gay and joyous day kept in the village. The church-bells rang a joyous peal, and the people put on Sunday clothes and wore nosegays—for Henry Manners and Deborah Clinton were married, and he insisted on giving a tea-drinking to all the old people. The tables were laid out in the green, and the greatest wonder of all was, that Lieutenant Roberts and his wife came down to look on, and take leave of the bride and bridegroom! A pretty sure sign, as one old man said, shaking his head, that there wasn't much ill-feeling between the villagers and the Coastguard folk, indeed he shouldn't much wonder if soon there would be no "little voyages" or "ventures" at all, since one of that party had actually married a Smuggler's Daughter!



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